

Date: August 26, 2009

To: Cambridge Taxicab Advisory SubCommittee
And Interested Parties

Fr: Richard V. Scali, Chairman

Re: Hearing on changes and amendments to Taxicab Rules and
Regulations- Decision

The License Commission held a hearing on July 28th with regards to the proposed amendments to the Taxicab rules and regulations. A decision hearing was held on August 12th and the attached rules are those that were approved 3-0.

A brief summary follows of those items that were decided:

- 1) Requirement that all taxicabs accept credit cards: This regulation was reduced to a voluntary program. However, if a cab medallion is transferred or sold, a credit card system must be provided in the new cab. Also, if a credit card system is provided now or in the future, no minimum fare can be requested, the cab must clearly be marked to notify the public that credit cards are accepted, (we are in the process of designing such designation), and the cab driver may not refuse a fare if the customer wishes to use a card. In addition, any person, company, radio service, manager, lessor or processing bank, may not charge more than 5% for such processing fee. No driver may use an entity to process credit cards who charges more than 5%. All these items are to take effect October 1, 2009.

- 2) Increase in Meter Rates: Meter rates will not be increased at this time and was tabled for further review. Most drivers and owners testified that this is not the time to raise fares in the current economy in order to remain competitive in the transportation market.
- 3) Vintage year of vehicles: The rule was amended so that no vehicle may be more than 5 years old. The testimony received showed this to be a fair change since Boston only allows cabs to be 3 years old or younger and most cabs only have a 3 year life expectancy.

Our rule stays the same in that we will only allow use of sedans as taxicabs, except by special permission for SUV's and vans. We do have 8 Accessible vans through our ACT program and we have encouraged "green" vehicles through our Cambridge Clean Air cab program. If we do allow SUV's or vans, they shall be no more than 4 years old. Our regular inspection process would still apply.

- 4) Retraining for Existing Drivers: The Commission voted to send existing drivers back to school, at this time, only as part of a disciplinary action taken by the hackney officers, Executive Officer or Commissioners.

The Taxi school is at present, closed until November 2009 for a review and revamping of the curriculum for all students at this time. It is the School board's hope to reopen in November with this added retraining feature as well as an updated and revised curriculum for all new students. We would be able to send drivers back to school who have been disciplined or are in violation of our rules.

- 5) General Revised Rules: Our last printing of the Taxicab rules was in 1999. We are reworking and revising set up of all the rules to make it easier to read and understand. Some rules have been eliminated or changed in the past. It is our hope to have a revised copy for review before the final revised printing.

In the fall, the Subcommittee shall be revived for further discussion of taxi issues. Additional membership is encouraged and will be reviewed at the upcoming meeting. Anyone wishing to be a part of the subcommittee, or if you have any comments or questions, please feel free to contact Elizabeth Lint, Executive Officer at 617-349-6140 or email at elint@cambridgema.gov.

cc: Robert Haas, Police Commissioner; Gerald Reardon, Fire Chief; Dan Turner, Dep Fire Chief; All Taxicab Subcommittee; Officer Benny Szeto; Asst.Hackney Inspector Tony Arcos; Al Ewing, Taxischool Director; Robert Healy, City Manager; All City Councillors; Robyn Bell, Tourism Dept.; Joseph Russell; Bill Cavellini; Amir Sassim; Edward Gulaserian, Sheraton; Jim Carbone; Pierre Divil; Jacques Blemur; David Peterson; Lara Milhem, Checker Cab; John Moore; Joe Stein; George Fiorenza, A/B; Rosalie Anders; Maura Graham; Tibor Hangyal; Peter Sheinfield; Lourdes Townsend-Whole Foods; Lee Kane-Whole Foods; Claude Jacobs, Chief Public Health Officer; Jeff Walker, Mayor's Office; Kristin Benakis-Tourism Dept.; Lt Jack Albert; Wayne Amaral, Traffic and Parking